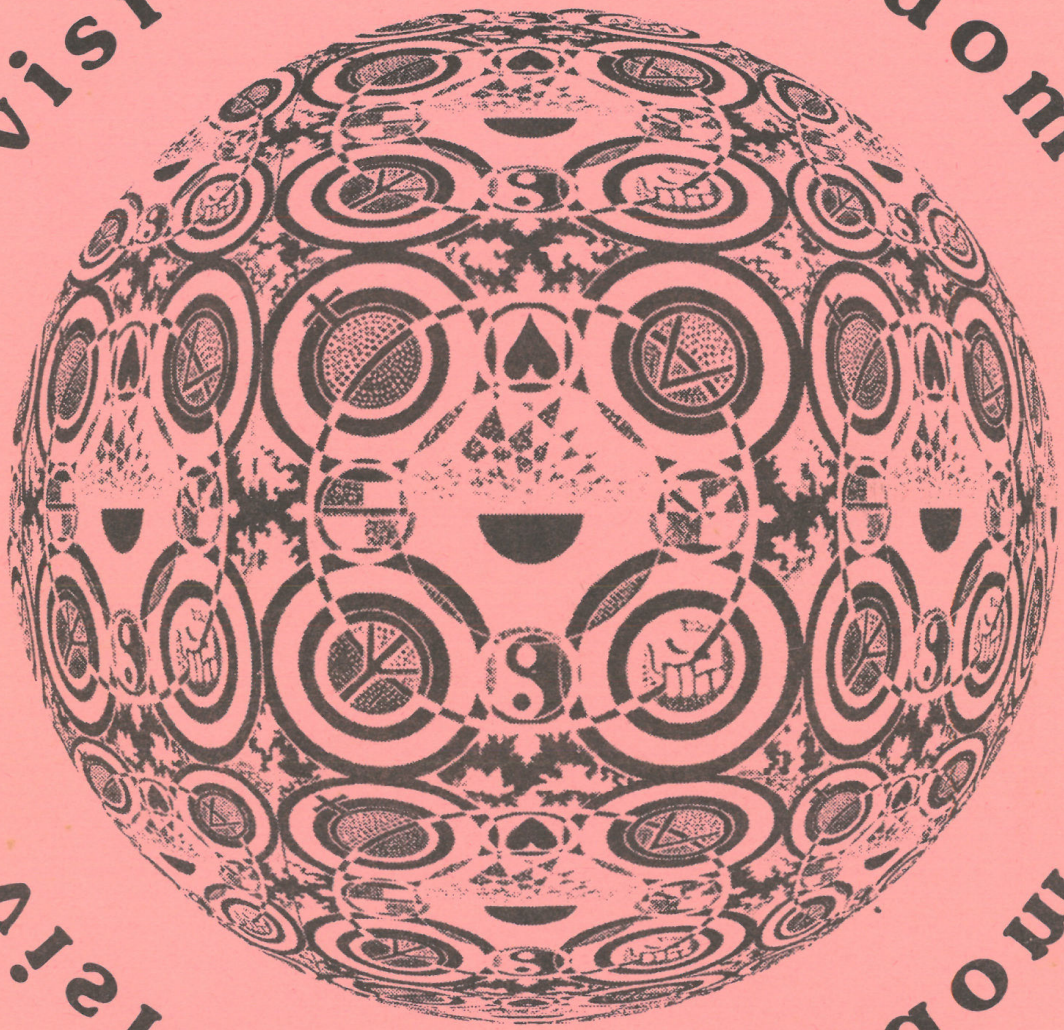
.visions of freedom.



.mobgert to snoisiv.

anarchy

To the tune of "*Only You*"

Anarchy!
It is reality.
Anarchy!
Responsibility.
As we forward go
If fast or slow
No God! No Master too!
Freedom's vision true
And all through Anarchy.

Hierarchy!
It wasn't meant to be.
Hierarchy!
It's such pomposity.
A man in funny hats
Who says "Come Back!"
And all his motley crew.
Not for me or you
This old hierarchy.

Sung by
Monsignor Porca Madonna,
apostolic delegate to the
gay community.
(Written at the time of the visit
of Pope John Paul II, 1995.)

The Garlic of Anarchism

Sometimes I'm patient enough to take on some socialist fuckwit in an argument. Sometimes I can bear with the slow progress of enthusing and exclaiming with someone who is just beginning to notice racism, sexism, oppression and the antics of the military-academic-bureaucratic-patriarchal-state complex; often I learn from them. I have phases of being able to hope for the possibility that human beings might relate without the constraints of sexism and the needless confusion and violence that currently seems inevitable due to the construction of our gendered identities.

At the Anarchist conference I was not in any of these moods. Luckily I didn't have to put up with socialists, and I managed to avoid wide eyed folk, although I suspect they might have been refreshing. however basic and stupid sexist, homophobic ignorance and defensiveness was certainly unavoidably around. Fuck it's boring and offensive. It's often subtle, often unthinking and always contradicts what I feel are the basic tenets of anarchism which I'll talk more about later.

Whereas once I would have unconditionally been crushed, having my awakefulness slowly choked into dull rage by basic stupidity and sexism, lately I raise my eyebrows and think about something interesting. This is the luxury of having recovered somewhat from acute violence, of feeling involved with a good community of activists and being tired from doing what I feel is lots of useful work lately. Also I suppose I don't accept much from politically active/involved men any more, especially with regard to concepts of gender thinking, self reflexivity and just being prepared to shut the fuck up. I know a few men who are interested in thinking about the issues and the urgently relevant contributions feminists have made to concepts of freedom, liberation, and sexuality, but on the whole they are very very few and the level of commitment to thinking about sexism, gender and sexuality is still very disappointing.

My new absence of response surprised some of my friends at the Anarchist Conference. They wondered about where some of my politics had gone to I think. So did I. Perhaps the friction between my outraged observations and my hope - anger/impatience has been worn away into too many burnouts, too many sitting up all night trying to explain through the barrage of defensive hijacks, of having to use horror - describing rape, scenes from Bosnia etc - every day to make people think.

Sounds a bit dramatic I suppose, but basically I couldn't really give a fuck if some wanker from Brisbane can't perceive what seems to be a very obvious continuum in violence or that some nationally despised loser is homophobic, at the moment it's not in my job description to think that these creatures are terribly important.

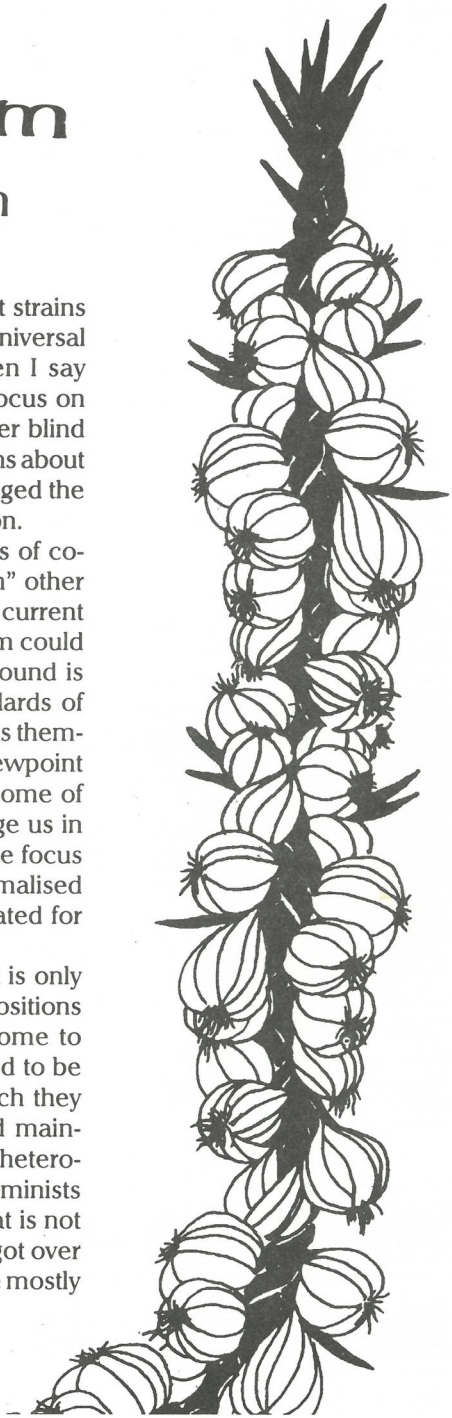
When the dog has got worms, I'm not going to try to get to know a few of the worms personally and talk them out of their mission, I'm going to fill the dog up with garlic.

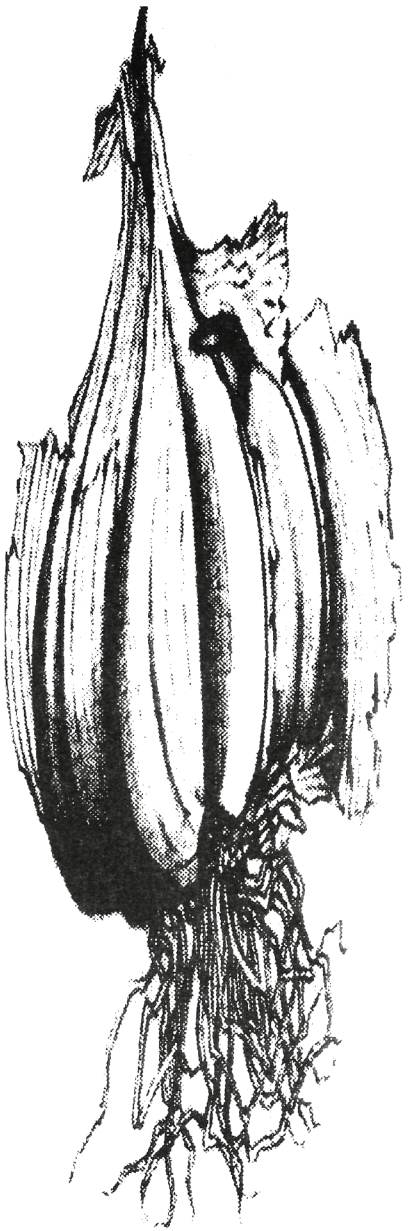
Why Feminism
is the Garlic of Anarchism

Feminism, like anarchism has heaps of different strains and ideas associated with it - there is nothing universal or exclusively beautiful about feminism. when I say feminism is the garlic of anarchism, I mean that a focus on gender power sweeps through the historically gender blind understanding of anarchism and brings a lot of questions about sexuality and identity into the picture which has changed the flavour of Anarchist notions of freedom and liberation.

Anarchists have always said, with varying degrees of coherency, that a lot more is a t stake in the "revolution" other than class and capitalism. anarchism has stretched current ideas and has challenged what liberation and freedom could really mean. when much of the political thinking around is about preserving notions of 'democracy' and 'standards of living', Anarchists have constantly pointed out the ideas themselves are infused with and saturated in a certain viewpoint of power. Anarcha feminists have also pointed out some of the different regimes of gender conditioning that cage us in entirely "unnatural" and twisted ways. The crux of the focus of anarchism to me is that ideas that have been normalised due to merciless reinforcement need to be interrogated for their real origin.

Power is often intangible to those who wield it. It is only by being forced to, or by talking with and noticing positions that other people exist in, that the powerful will come to understand their position. Feminists have also needed to be forced to contemplate the power position from which they speak, especially when the ideas that characterised mainstream "feminism" were exposed to be very white, heterosexual and academic for example. In no way are feminists immune from power hang ups or defensiveness - that is not what I am saying. The reactions that Anarchists have got over time - from accusations of 'dreamer' to the bullet, have mostly





been borne fro a defensiveness to the truths Anarchists have spoken when they have made it very clear who is wielding power and who they are wielding it over, and precisely what hey plan to do about it. Wit the way success and life itself is defined at the moment, some people have a lot to loose if Anarchist principles are even contemplated let alone acted upon so a lot of energy will be put into the eye roll, the ridicule etc.

So here is the connection - When gender power is pointed out, when the assumptions and blind spots of certain world views that have been conditioned, reinforced and normalised are pointed out, very very similar tactics are used to ridicule and demonise feminists and people highlighting the ways that sexual norms oppress. Sure, it's really hard to maintain the mythical open mind and an eagerness to have a dig and work out where you are coming from, but this one is particularly dated. it's basic because it's so deeply and personally every present. there is nothing natural about the way we are conditioned to be sexual beings. there is also a lot of baggage to unpack and sort through, it effects us all every day and the private and seemingly personal processes that we go through do have a very clear power base. Who benefits and how? It seems pretty clear that white able-bodied heterosexuals have a pretty gross advantage. No one is asking for self flagellation or indiscriminate lip service to be paid. Certainly reading books is not enough, but thinking and talking and being prepared to challenge yourself seems to be a lot of what anarchism demands. What some of us are specifically NOT asking for is to be systematically ignored and then told to shut up if we pipe up and say 'Hey, what about.....'

This was what was offensive about some of what happened at the conference. It was the way that challenges to the discussion were reacted to. It made a lot of people feel really shithouse not because anyone expected everybody to be totally tuned into everybody's differences, it was that the same old defensiveness tactics were rolled out and given another unquestioned hearing that pissed some people off. Many people will know that when you actually take your

politics out of the comfortable ghetto of the "us', out of academia, out of the clique of the junkie grunge club, you find that you cop a fair amount of ridicule and defensiveness. it was just a slap in the face to cop the same kind of shit in a place where we hoped a reaction to the arguments might be a little different considering the basis of our geographical togetherness was a loose notion of anarchism.

In other words, power is oppressive and when exerted, this oppression is often only noticed by the oppressed. The world view of the powerful is that they are normal, have a birthright to the privileges they hold. To be told in no uncertain terms that you are being oppressive whether that be in a conversation or in a public place or by being beaten to a pulp usually doesn't go down to well for the listener.

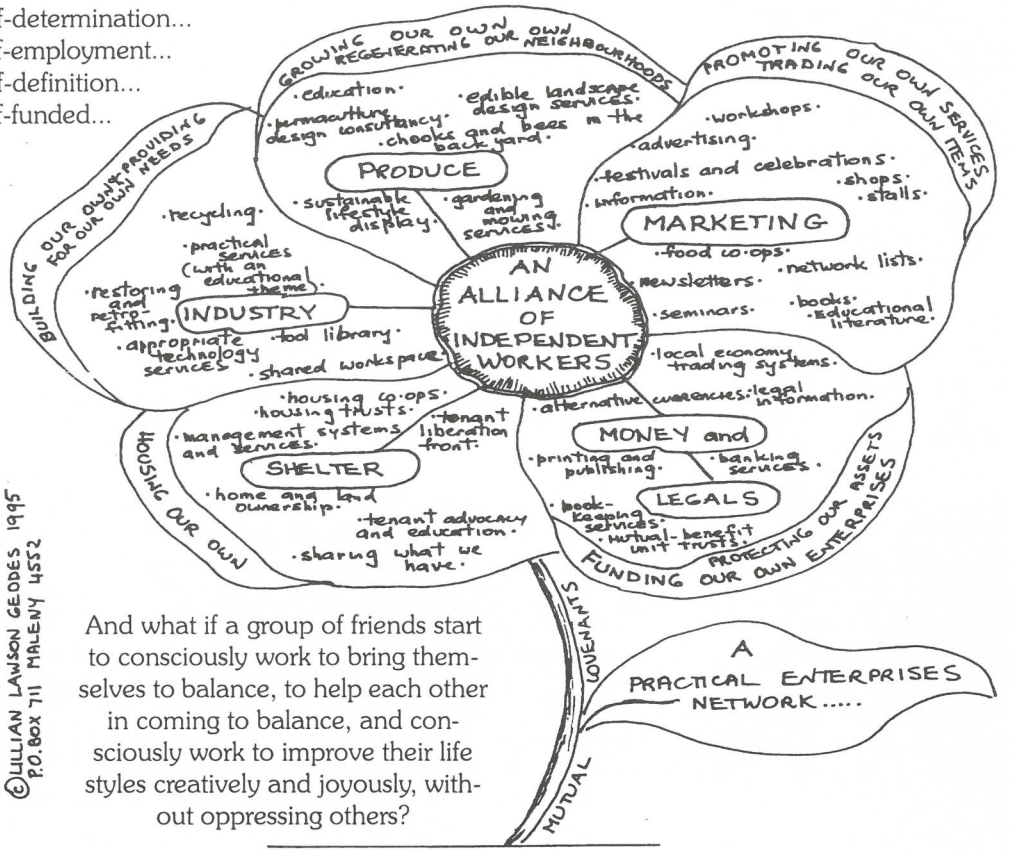
When women first come to understand they have been touched very deeply by male dominated or patriarchal thinking in their lives, it is quite a big shock. It's a very involved process to notice the sheer amount of crap instilled into them. I think what lots of men fail to realise is the constancy of messages women receive and play back to themselves about who they are and how they should behave and that part of getting out of these constraints is challenging gender and power anywhere we find it. many of the lessons to teach these behaviours have been slow in the learning, and may have conveyed by obligation filled home demonstrations when young. this is more interesting than saying 'Yeah, advertising is bad', the challenge is to work out how to change gendered and oppressive assumptions and unconscious behaviours so that sexual and psychological violence against women is eradicated, to notice the continuum of attitudes that result in a very male dominated fuck up of a world.

Emma Garlic Goldman spent a lot of time confronting the Anarchist community of her time, trying to get those who raged o about freedom to conceive of different forms of power. She was harassed and ridiculed and had many eyes rolled at her. I think the women who said a thing or two or three about what was going on at the Anarchist conference were brave and should have been supported. there were lot of really great things about the conference. I think lots of people learned heaps and that many will try to take on some of the issues that wee raised. I hope so.

Flick Ruby

Work with a social conscience

Visions of freedom...
self-determination...
self-employment...
self-definition...
self-funded...



And what if a group of friends start to consciously work to bring themselves to balance, to help each other in coming to balance, and consciously work to improve their life styles creatively and joyously, without oppressing others?

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"If each member of society is to have the opportunity of earning their own living by their own labour - without as a result of enslaving anyone else, either to a private individual, or to a company (or to a union) - they must obviously always have the opportunity of acquiring the spade with which to dig, the cotton with which to spin thread and weave cloth, that bread, those clothes, that room to live in, that place to work in, before they can manufacture anything having an exchange value in society."

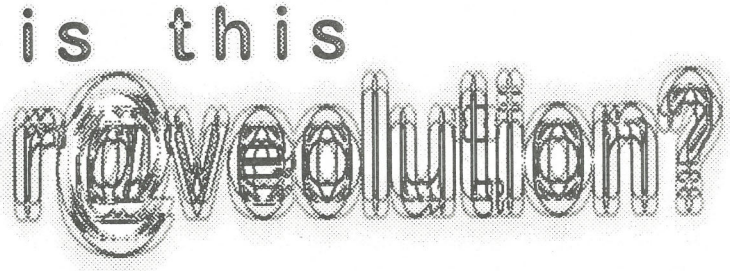
Peter Kropotkin

radical raves reclaim and liberate space in many dimensions

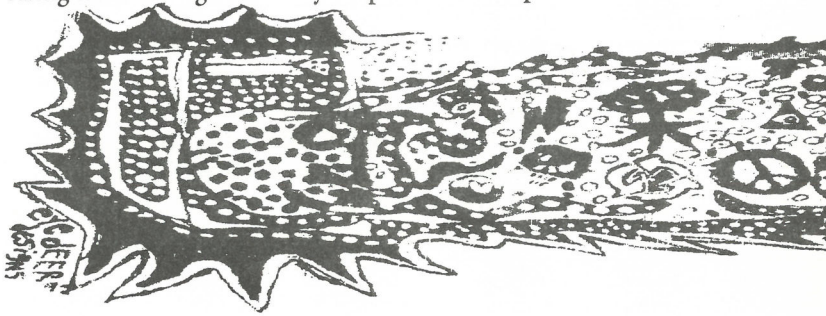
Like the punk e$_x$plosion, ten years earlier, techno's initial blast of creativity and excitement was hastily sandbagged by commerce and hype. But thrown up in the rubble are some anti-authoritarian gems of freedom.

The inyourface politics of punk rebellion put a circle @ on millions of badges and graffiti walls. People not only bought the symbol, they also read and thought about it.

The power and anger of punk's NO! was a reactive first step. But a culture of dissent and alternatives needs positive energy to fuel its further development. Where was YES?



Techno's seismic shift cracked the conservative mono-cultural concrete, bringing back the sunlight to the age old spores of freedom. Well-mulched ideas from the fifties beatniks and sixties hippies have provided rich compost for ever resilient strains of under culture. New genes, old flairs. With each generation of dn@ becoming wiser and more hardy. Aimless anger and itchy agit energy has mutated into the liberation of spaces in which to nurture resistance. It's a refusal to be subjected to what the beer barons and mainstream culture cabal dole out as entertainment. When a festive gathering is created by and for those attending it, empowerment is generated. The do it yourself/ourself (DIY/DIO) spirit brings out people's subversive strength motivating a move beyond passive consumption.

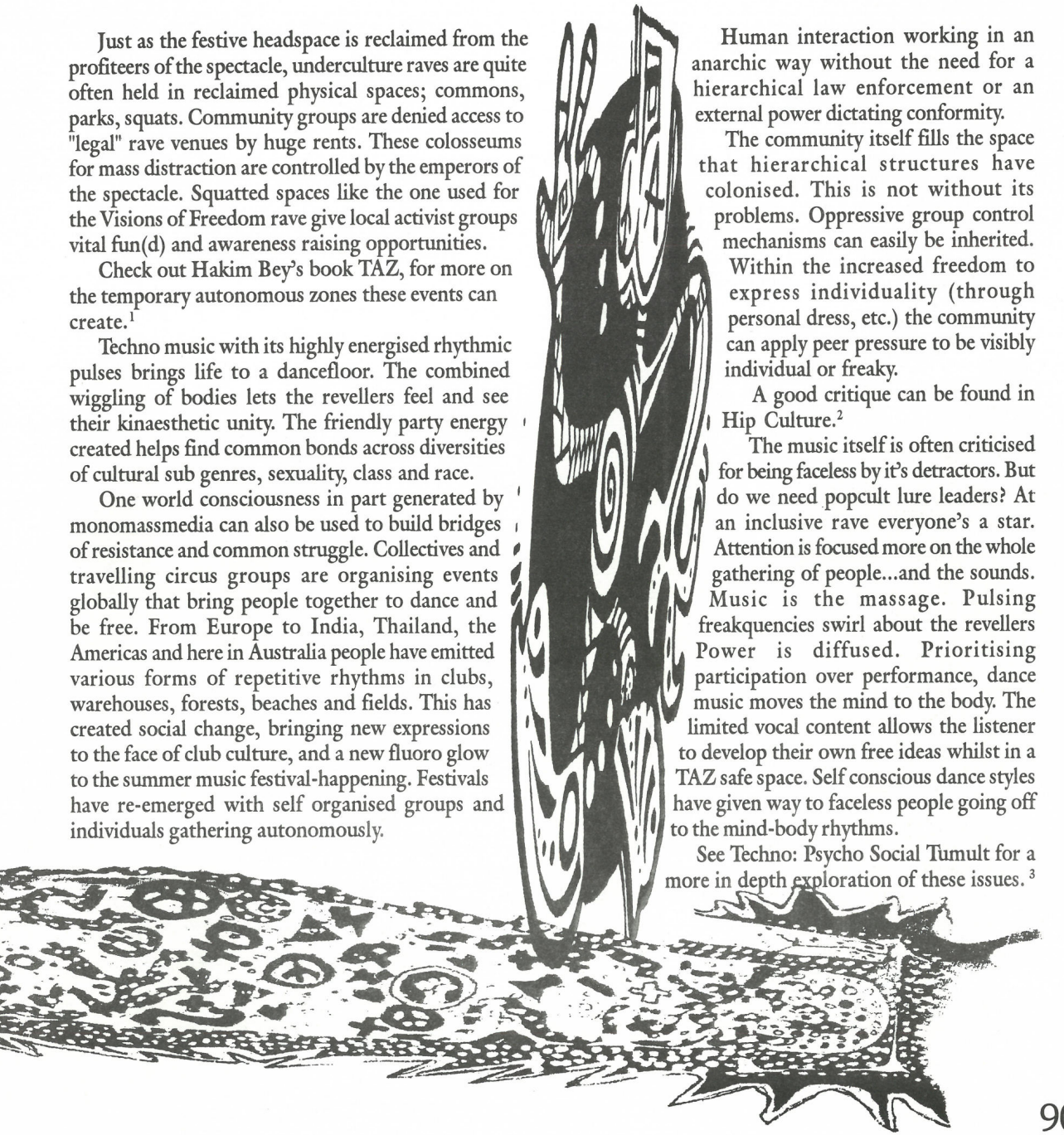


Just as the festive headspace is reclaimed from the profiteers of the spectacle, underculture raves are quite often held in reclaimed physical spaces; commons, parks, squats. Community groups are denied access to "legal" rave venues by huge rents. These colosseums for mass distraction are controlled by the emperors of the spectacle. Squatted spaces like the one used for the Visions of Freedom rave give local activist groups vital fun(d) and awareness raising opportunities.

Check out Hakim Bey's book TAZ, for more on the temporary autonomous zones these events can create.[1]

Techno music with its highly energised rhythmic pulses brings life to a dancefloor. The combined wiggling of bodies lets the revellers feel and see their kinaesthetic unity. The friendly party energy created helps find common bonds across diversities of cultural sub genres, sexuality, class and race.

One world consciousness in part generated by monomassmedia can also be used to build bridges of resistance and common struggle. Collectives and travelling circus groups are organising events globally that bring people together to dance and be free. From Europe to India, Thailand, the Americas and here in Australia people have emitted various forms of repetitive rhythms in clubs, warehouses, forests, beaches and fields. This has created social change, bringing new expressions to the face of club culture, and a new fluoro glow to the summer music festival-happening. Festivals have re-emerged with self organised groups and individuals gathering autonomously.



Human interaction working in an anarchic way without the need for a hierarchical law enforcement or an external power dictating conformity.

The community itself fills the space that hierarchical structures have colonised. This is not without its problems. Oppressive group control mechanisms can easily be inherited. Within the increased freedom to express individuality (through personal dress, etc.) the community can apply peer pressure to be visibly individual or freaky.

A good critique can be found in Hip Culture.[2]

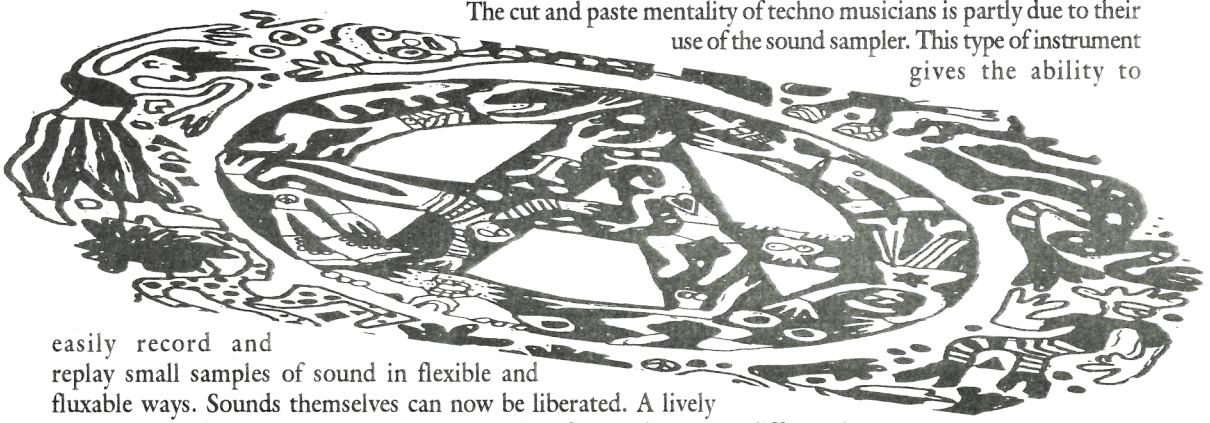
The music itself is often criticised for being faceless by it's detractors. But do we need popcult lure leaders? At an inclusive rave everyone's a star. Attention is focused more on the whole gathering of people...and the sounds. Music is the massage. Pulsing freakquencies swirl about the revellers Power is diffused. Prioritising participation over performance, dance music moves the mind to the body. The limited vocal content allows the listener to develop their own free ideas whilst in a TAZ safe space. Self conscious dance styles have given way to faceless people going off to the mind-body rhythms.

See Techno: Psycho Social Tumult for a more in depth exploration of these issues. [3]

Trance formation of linear time scales is also an important part of the radical rave project. Dancing in the endless metronumbic beat is a liberation from the tyranny of human imposed chronologic. Allowing a simultaneous experience of milliseconds and hours. Eventually the suns slow rays bring the night to a close and the dancers feel the wheels of the universe turning. Many rave festivals are held at the special times of full moon, solstice and equinox. This is a conscious attempt to return dance celebration to natural cycles of the moon and sun.

Cultural and tec know logical shifts have opened up dance music to polymorphous cross fertilisation.

When people stopped dancing and fell down laughing at a mix of techno and the Skippy theme tune it wasn't because they didn't like it. The human mind loves well-crafted contradictory sensory stimulation. Unifying diversity, DJ's freely mix tracks from a broad selection. The only limits to their stylistic border crossing are dexterity and imagination.



The cut and paste mentality of techno musicians is partly due to their use of the sound sampler. This type of instrument gives the ability to easily record and replay small samples of sound in flexible and fluxable ways. Sounds themselves can now be liberated. A lively bleep once held prisoner by an oppressive track is free to dance to a different beat. Evil lyrics of consumption, fear and greed can be detourned and mutated into statements of joyful resistance.

The techno/rave underculture is far from all positive, it displays as much variety as the rest of society. Many parties are purely commercial, failing to create the magical safe space that a mutually energised event creates. So to keep the spirit of undercultural resistance alive and composting as always the answer is DIY!

1 Hip Culture (1970) Times Change Press 1023 6th Av., NY, NY. 10018 USA.

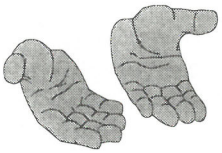
2 T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism by Hakim Bey. Autonomedia, 1991.

3 Techno: Psycho Social Tumult by TechNET. BM Jed, London WC1N 3XX. jed@pHreak.intermedia.co.uk

This article was written by john & pete '95/6
and is also available at
http://sysx.apana.org.au/video/vsv.html under 'raveolution'.
POBox 13 Enmore 2042 Australia. johnj@lyst.apana.org.au

cat@lyst
http://www.usyd.edu.au/~sfraser/cat/

During the Visions of Freedom Conference, Sydney was visited by Pope John Paul II on his second coming to Australia. OPI were determined to greet him with due respect this time round:



Order of Perpetual Indulgence, Sydney
Theological College and Computing Centre
PO Box 453 Randwick, NSW, 2031 Australia.

VISIT BY VATICAN HEAD
August 15, 1994

Karol Wojtyla, the Bishop of Rome, travelling under the alias Pope John Paul II, will visit Sydney in January 1995. The visit will be short, as he remembers his 1986 trip.

The OPI provided the only sustained protest during his last visit, but we would like an even bigger and more broadly based one this time. We invite members of your group to join with us in our proposed actions. Even if you wish to hold your own reception for the visitor, it would help to have some liaison, so we don't fall over each other on the day.

Please let us know of your interest in this historic event, and any ideas or limitations you have. Personally, I don't want to draw police sniper fire! Please pass this invitation to any other groups that you think may want to be involved.

Sister Laura Theland,
OPI Papal Reception Committee.

Pope Free Zone

Montgomery County Jail

The Plowshares Movement is a radical christian peace group who use direct action. Ciaron O'Rielly was arrested and jailed for his part in disarming a B52. This is an extract from his book, *Bomber Grounded, Runway Closed.*

Shortly after writing in February, Bill and I were moved by the federal marshals from the county jail in the Catskills back to Fonda. Sue and Moana, meanwhile, were moved from Syracuse to the town of Rochester.

Bill and I were to be moved seven times in as many weeks. Such moves seemed designed to keep you disoriented, isolated from support, frustrating attempts to settle in and build an organising base. The Catskill authorities were not thrilled to have us. We brought unwanted media attention to their hometown operation. This seems to be a universal fear amongst all "correctional" institutions. In an Associated Press article the staff described us as "traitors, a quartet of Judases betraying the U.S."

"I consider them traitors," said Greene County Sheriff Charles Daucher who didn't like having Streit and O'Reilly in his jail. "The definition of a traitor is someone who gives aid and comfort to the enemy. That is what they are doing."

Our crime continues to be loving our enemies and not slaughtering their children. Reports come through the mainstream press of Iraqi children eating grass, hospitals reduced to breeding grounds for disease, mothers riddled with anxiety unable to breast feed their starving infants.

The conditions for Moana and Sue in Syracuse Public Safety Building have been worse than we've experienced. They were overcrowded, given little food and minimal contact with the outside world. Due to institutional negligence, four women unnecessarily miscarried in their cells - ignored as they screamed for help. We are reminded that jail is about constant institutional humiliation and dehumanisation. It has little to do with justice and reconciliation, a lot to do with violence and vengeance, nothing to do with addressing the causes of crime. Jail is designed to slam those from the underclass who dare to mimic the theft and violence of the governments and corporations, an institutional theft and violence that defines our economic and

political system. Jail is our society in high relief: the structured violence, humiliation, racism, class lines, social control and television as sedation. One attempts to remain contemplative, prayerful and centred. A struggle not to internalise the order of oppression, not to be possessed by the regime. To resist this possession, there is need for exorcism. Such a time arose in Fonda on the 48th day of our imprisonment.

On arrival we were placed in the dormitory, regarded as a privileged area. Privilege in jail requires a higher degree of cooperation with one's incarceration and humiliation. Heady heights that we were unable to grasp.

Such cooperation creates a spiritual malaise. The ethnic layout of the thirty bed dormitory was entirely white. There were two colour TVs blaring on different channels all our waking hours. On the Sabbath we were caught between the Speedway and an Arnold Schwarzenneger film festival. There were a lot of trustees, snitches and sado-masochistic mateship with the guards. This collusion spilled over into pornographic swap meets and bilateral humiliation of weaker inmates.

On Monday morning the guard decided to start the week with a tirade of abuse directed at me. I responded that I understood his self-hatred, that it sprung from hating his job that was boring, irrelevant and produced nothing but human suffering. I suggested that he might like to find a real job that actually produced something at the end of the day - some food, shelter, clothing or human service - instead of all this misery and vengeance. I reminded him that I was a prisoner of the Federal Government and not his personal therapy bag.

He told me to fuck off.

I asked him to open the door and I would gladly oblige. I reminded him that this was a jail and not a school camp. He was a paid professional and not here in a voluntary capacity. And that when we are sentenced by his courts, it is to jail as punishment and not for punishment to be instigated by his moods.

He retreated to his observation pod. I paused for applause, but there was none. The revolutionary masses had not risen to their feet and screamed, "I'm Spartacus!". Just Bill nodding slowly, saying: "That won't go unanswered."

When the guard returned to take me to maximum security, Bill followed him questioning the injustice being done. It was just too much for the poor boy to take; threat came to shove and he was soon sitting on Bill's head. I decided to create a diversion by giving a speech to the dorm linking the prison system and the war. More guards arrived, I was moved to max and Bill to solitary confinement.

Resistance in jail is highly problematic. The reality is fascism, pure and simple. The struggle, as all struggle, is to be human. This action was exorcism: to name the demons and expel their dominion from our soul. The spirits of masochism, self-hatred, misogyny, oppression and violence. It was good for the soul, if not for the record. We got "cast out" of the dorm. I don't know how the demons fared, the decision is still out. It felt like an important experience in our prison journey and requires continued reflection.

Bill was moved to the monastic seclusion and sensory deprivation of solitary. I started my time on the max tier with a 24 hour lockdown. Most of the guys on the tier are doing serious time and are waiting to be moved to the feds or upstate

jails. The majority are Puerto Ricans who are sympathetic with our confrontation with the guards. The Puerto Ricans display a strong sense of community, humour, solidarity and nurture. They are a delight to live with in such a confined space. There are a few reactionary white guys into the Master Race thing, gung ho for the war and don't appreciate my politics or presence. The Puerto Ricans are protective of me. There are some who share an interest in Scripture, and we reflect together.

* * * * * * * * * *

News comes through of John Schuchardt, one of the original Plowshares 8, confronting President Bush during a Sunday service in Kennebunkport. John is arrested after pleading in the name of Christ to stop the bombing. Also news of friends blockading at the Pentagon and another plowshares action - this time in Sweden at a factory producing grenade launchers.

The night before the Ground War, America celebrates the Grammys. Rock'n'roll safely in the hands of bureaucrats and millionaires. No haven of social criticism. Sinead O'Connor is ridiculed for her boycott and statement against the war. Bob Dylan chooses to sing "Masters of War" to the national television audience. A prophetic choice in the midst of such massacre and profiteering. Unfortunately he appears, and sounds, so out of it that only the faithful have an inkling of the lyrics. Very few celebrities have spoken out against the war. Like Democrat politicians and Church bishops, they know their careers are on the line if they oppose such a popular massacre.

The massive extent of the aerial and naval bombardment (half the tonnage dropped in all ten years of the Vietnam Air War) has its definitive reflection in the brevity of the Ground War in Kuwait. Of course the Ground War in Iraq rages as I write. A return to Low Intensity Conflict manipulations with free-flowing Kurdish, Shiite and Iraqi fatalities.

As predicted, B52 bombers were the major workhorse of the Air War. This "News Service Report" describes a typical attack:

"The attacks begin without warning because the bombers fly 10 miles high and cannot be heard from the ground. Seconds before the ground quakes, a zooming sound announces the arrival of as much as 60,000 pounds of explosives from a single aeroplane.

Powerful shock waves etch ripples into the ground, shredding rocks and metal into shards that whirl through the air like shrapnel.

For those not amongst the corpses littering the ground, the concussion shock waves burst their eardrums or render them dazed and disoriented. Some emerge from bomb blast craters, blood flowing from their ears and nostrils, the whites of their eyeballs turned red from ruptured capillaries.

Pentagon officials are even more tight-lipped about what the B52s are dropping on enemy troops. They have acknowledged that there are four types of bombs on the scene (nuclear weapons are said not to be included):

*** Gravity: 500-700 pound bombs that either explode upon impact or dig below the surface with time delay - detonators to destroy underground bunkers.**

*** Cluster: canisters containing thousands of tiny metal fragments that fly apart over a wide area, penetrating deep into the body and severing internal tissue.**

*** Napalm: exploding tanks that spew a gasoline-based jelly that adheres to the skin and burns through to the bone.**

*** Fuel-air: time delay bombs that disperse a fine mist of fuel followed by a massive fireball that incinerates anything or anyone in its path."**

***Post Standard Syracuse* 4/2/91**

The U.S. military unleashed total war on the Iraqi people. The U.N. reports that Iraq has been bombed back into the pre-industrial age. From the traffic jam - "turkey shoot" of fleeing Iraqi conscripts north of Kuwait City to the calculated destruction and poisoning of the country's water supply - this has been a massacre. A massacre in which the B52 played a central role. U.S. killing technology has improved the kill ratio from 50 Vietnamese for every U.S. fatality in the 60s and 70s to 1,000 dead Arabs for every American death in this war.

George Bush declares, "We have kicked the Vietnam Syndrome, once and for all!" Was it a syndrome that objected to massacring large numbers of innocent people or merely losing too many U.S. casualties in the process? Whatever it was, Bush defines it as a sickness and claims the war has delivered the cure. Any illusions that the end of the Cold War would be seized as an opportunity for world peace have been smashed by this thrust for total U.S. hegemony. The first of the Third World wars to be waged against "outlaw" nations that step out of line. The media claims a 90% approval rate for the war and the President. The Democrats who had opposed are now recanting. Evil appears hi-tech, media proficient and all-pervasive. Still the spirit finds room to move, good friends refuse to worship at the foot of the New World Order, build human community and resist.

The Coalition Against Police Violence (CAPV)

PRINCIPLES

(1) The Principle Of Non-violence.
Non-violence is the most important, the fundamental principle of the CAPV. The Coalition was formed out of the anguish and horror that being subjected to violence produces, it is therefore against our reason for existence to support violence in any form.

There are great tides of anger and hatred flowing all over our world. So many people are fighting and hating so many other people, over so many different things. It is not the function of the CAPV to add to that. Our function, our aim, our purpose, is to lessen the anger, lessen the hatred, lessen the violence - to lift up the minds of those we deal with; to figure out ways and means to make things better. Our actions are consciously directed towards the higher evolution of our human society.

The CAPV is not against police, it is only police violence we take a stand against. We cannot help create a non-violent police force by fighting the police. Operating via the fundamental principle of non-violence, we engage in pathfinding, in wayshowing. We help create a non-violent police force by seeing and communicating new, non-violent ways in which the police can operate.

(2) The Principle Of Equality.
In the CAPV, all people are equal. There are no 'leaders' and 'followers'. Each one of us has equal authority to act on our own discretion. Each one of us is unique and adds our own special touch to the work of the Coalition. We put into practice Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of unity."

(3) The Principle Of Being Positive.
A positive (success-expecting) mental attitude produces far more energy with which to put an idea into action, than a negative (failure-expecting) mental attitude, which drains energy. It is a waste of time and effort to attempt to do an action if we feel that nothing will be achieved by it. When we are thinking of actions to take it is obvious that we should put our efforts into those actions about which we feel most positive. We should put our efforts into those actions which we feel will have a good result.

(4) The Principle Of Financial Independence From The Government.
The acceptance of one-off grants here and there may not compromise our independence, however, to place ourselves in the position of being dependent for any of our activities upon regular money from a government source renders us liable to manipulation or cutting off of funds. If we have placed ourselves in the position of being dependent upon such funds in order to be able to continue any of our activities, then having them cut will seriously weaken those activities.

AIMS

The fundamental aim of the CAPV is to peacefully change those structures in society which presently allow police to violently abuse people.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

We are a fluid, mobile network of individuals, rather than a

highly structured, rigid hierarchy. Each of us is autonomous and free to act on our own discretion as we perceive the need or opportunity.

Our group actions are achieved through communication, cooperation and sharing, rather than through a chain of command. Our individual actions are achieved by seizing the moment, by acting immediately, using our own judgement, whenever and wherever we see an opportunity to constuctively tackle the issue of police violence. This structure allows the expression of dynamic self-motivation and the positive self-expression of inspired people.

A person joins the Coalition Against Police Violence simply by beginning to communicate with us about their ideas on how to create a non-violent police force, or by sharing their information, and working together on actions. There is no joining or membership fee.

METHODS

Since every person in the Coalition is equal to every other person, that means, in effect, that every person is 'the leader'. Each person's ideas as to how best to stop police abuse of power are the ideas to be acted upon. Every person has the authority to act on their ideas and to share them with others in the Coalition. All persons agreeing with the ideas are free to join in the action. Those who do not agree with particular ideas can, instead, act on the ideas that they have. All non-violent ideas about stopping police abuse of power are worth acting upon. Because we are working to 'break the silence on police violence' many of our methods involve various forms of speaking out.

THE MEANING OF OUR LOGO

The Coalition started in Victoria and the logo is an adaptation of the Victorian police badge. They use, as their badge symbol, the inverted pentagram, a traditional occult symbol of oppression and negative power. We have righted the pentagram, putting the one point upwards, which symbolises balance and liberation of the spirit. The flying dove carrying an olive branch symbolises peace.

MAJOR PROJECTS

❖The distribution & exhibition of STRIPSEARCH, (by Stella Simmering of Simmering Video), a 15 minute documentary about stripsearching in prisons. It includes interviews from Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide & Darwin of prisoners' experiences, as well as views from people who work where strip search is used.
The video costs $60 or $30 concession - contact Stella c/o CAPV (Darwin), P.O. Box 41330, Casuarina, NT, 0811.

❖The Hobart branch of the CAPV has been collecting & writing up data on strip searching & urine testing of people in custody. The intention is to collect this data from all over Australia & to put it into book form for publication.

❖For a National File on Cases of Police Abuse of People, CAPV is collecting statutory declarations. This file will be the largest single collection of data on police violence in Australia & as such it will be a powerful tool for those groups & people wishing to stop police violence.

❖"Joining-the-forces"
It would appear to be quite practical for all those working to humanise the police-legal-prison system in Australia to join forces, share our data, take actions collectively & support each other. Accordingly CAPV is liaising & exploring federating with other like-minded groups; for example with CARPET (Campaign Against Repressive Police Equipment & Training), regarding the police use of capsicum spray; with Justice Action regarding stripsearching & various other matters; & even with Councils for Civil Liberties, for example the NSW CCL regarding stripsearching.

See the contacts page at the back of this magazine for info on how to contact the CAPV.

VISIONS OF FREEDOM PROGRAMME

Saturday 21 & Sunday 22 Jan. 1995

Saturday 9.30am. Plenary.

Opened and blessed by Monsignor Porca Madonna.

Looking at life and society - how did we get here, where do we want to go?

A critical appraisal of anarchy and the possibilities for change in Australia.

* Nun of the Below - Sisters of the Order of Perpetual Indulgence (OPI)
* Hierarchy vs. Demarchy - Brian Martin.
* Feminism - Diana Ward.
* Anarcho-syndicalism - Mark McGuire (Anarcho Syndicalist Federation - ASF).
* Ecology - Ariel Saleh.
* Anarchism - best chance yet ! - Libertarian Workers for a Self-managed Society (LWSS) Delegate.
* Utopian thought - Brian Laver.

1pm Lunch.

Book launch of Ciaron O'Reilly's "Bomber grounded, runway closed" by John Jiggens.

Afternoon

Ideas for changing the world & cultivating anarchy. How do we get where we want to go?

2pm in parallel sessions.

* Anarcho Syndicalism and privatisation.

Telecom - Nev Littler, Australia Post - Sid Parissi, Public Service - Charlie Richardson, International perspective - Dick Curlewis (ASF).

* Anarchism or Barbarism - structure, hierarchy and chaos. Talk by Joe Toscano.
* Anarchism and Feminism workshop.
* Self determination and Anti imperialism forum.

Panel: Agio Pereira (East Timor), Moses Havini (Bougainville), Rex Rumakiek (West Papua), and Barbara Nicholson (Indigenous Australia).

* Anarchy and ecology. Workshop with Chuck, Julian et al.

3.45 in parallel sessions.

* A/S (cont.)
* Intellectuality, free speech and postmodernism.

Panel: Jim Baker (Sydney Libertarians), Tony Katsigiannnis (Free speech C'ttee), Isla MacGregor (IDIA - Intellectual Dissent in Australia) and Bob Hodge (Humanities UWS).

* Anarchist political programs - building liberated politics. Issues, workplace, community and ecology. Panel: Brian Laver et al.
* Libertarian education, parenting and reality. Workshop with Erst Carmichael, Paul Walters et al.
* 5pm Book launch by John Jiggens and Macciza McPherson, of Jack Herer's book "The Emperor wears no clothes: Hemp and the Marijuana Conspiracy" and a hemp calendar.

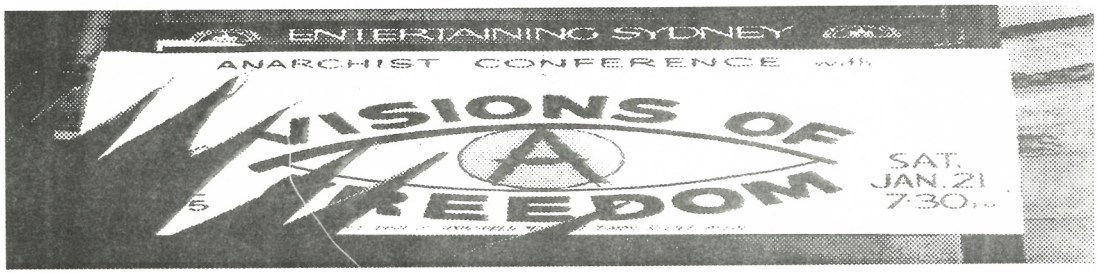
5.30-7pm Socialise over a meal provided by Alfalfa House Food CoOp, plus art, music, videos, internet demonstration; etc.

7.30-10pm Sydney Town Hall.

Talk by Noam Chomsky: "Thoughts on Goals and Visions", followed by questions and discussion. Chaired by Brian Laver and introduced by Caroline Graham.

10pm-dawn.

Performers, bands and djs in an all night anarchodelic rave at the "Golden Ox", squat/venue.



ANARCHIST CONFERENCE / FESTIVAL

Merewether Building, City Rd., Sydney University

Sunday

Working together to grow our culture & defend it.

9.30am in parallel sessions.

* The student movement. Panel: Jamie Parker, et al.

* Anarcho syndicalism: strategy and organisation in Australia. Presented by Dick Curlewis and Jeremy Dixon. Videos on 1990 Victorian tram and 1986 Nurses' disputes presented by ASF Secretary, Sean.

* Anarchist organization workshop with Anne Fahey, Steve Reghenzani, Steve Roper, Joe Toscano (LWSS).

* Policing, crime, and social control. Panel: Tim Anderson (Justice Action), Stella S., Shannon E.& Nick (Coalition Against Police Violence), members of Anarchist Black Cross.

* "Self reliance; networking and sustaining ourselves". A tools and training workshop presented by Lillian Geddes.

11.30am in parallel sessions.

* Men's group.

* A/S (cont.)

* Anarchist organisation (cont. until 1.30pm)

* Critique of recent Sydney Anarchist practice. Discussion - Keith.

* Militarism, non-violence and social defence workshop with Brian Martin, Brian Laver, Ciaron O'Reilly.

* Printed information distribution, bookshops, stalls, etc. workshop.

* Gay, lesbian and transgender politics workshop - OPI et al.

* A revolutionary anarchist party - Rob Sparrow.

1 pm Lunch

by Alfalfa with music, art, videos, internet, etc.

Book launch of Graham Purchase's "Anarchism and environmental survival" by Sid Parissi.

2pm in parallel sessions.

* "Class since the fall of the Berlin Wall" a talk by Michael Matteson.

* Anarchist media networking session. CATv, Cat@lyst, Radio Skid Row, 4ZzZ,- Anarchist Media Institute, et al.

* HEMP campaign workshop with Tony Kneipp, Bob Hopkins, Timothy More.

* Victorian tramways dispute workshop with Leigh Kendall.

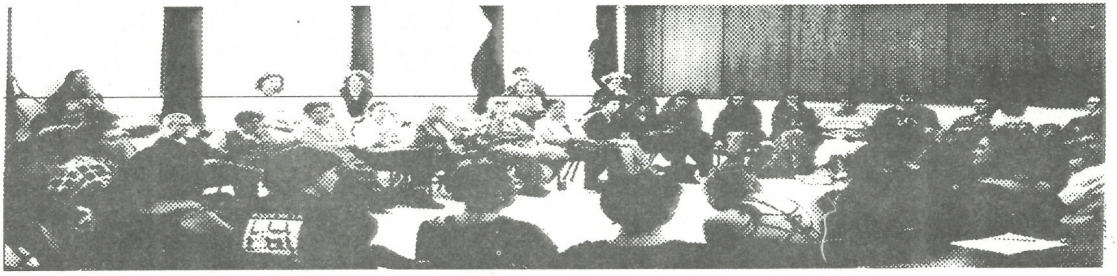
* Confederation of anarchist groups - building common campaigns. Workshop with Brian Laver, et al.

3.15-5pm Plenary

What's the conference been like and where do we go from here?

Throughout the conference the following activities were ongoing.

Food and drinks by Alfalfa House food co-operative with some extra catering (and hugs) by Michael A, performances and music in the courtyard from the likes of Peter Hicks and friends, chillout/art installation by Brenton and Violet; a creche, a hands on internet demonstration by the Cat@lyst collective, CopyRiot - a multimedia presentation on copyrights vs information freedom and an Anarchoactivists' video festival presented by Community Access Television.

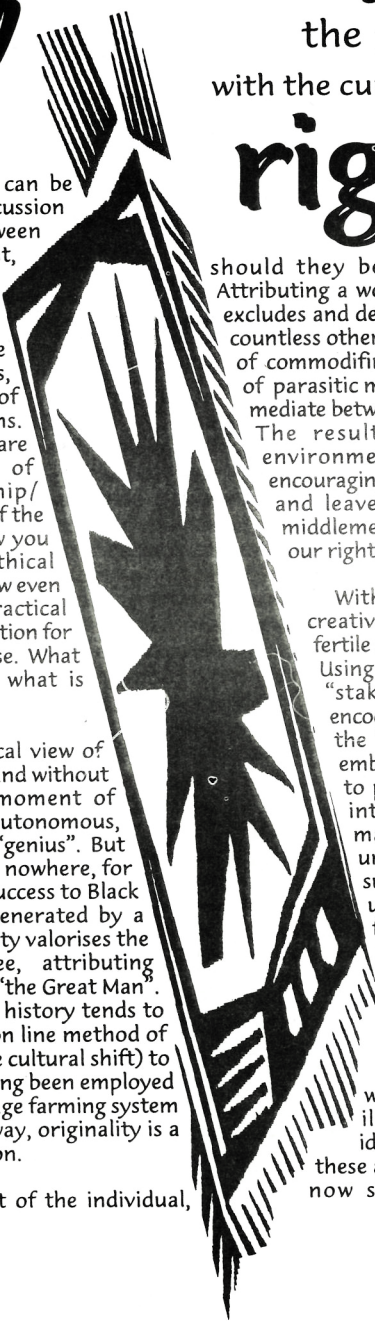


copy

from: copy rant
the free zine
with the cure for infomortis™

rights?

Grattan, Fraser & Jacobs et al.



The value of copyright legislation can be debated in a number of ways. Often discussion of the issues fails to distinguish between different types of objections to copyright, adding confusion to a complicated issue. In this article, the various problems with the use of copyright will be divided up into two main areas: objections to the NOTION of copyright on ethical grounds, and objections to the APPLICATION of copyright legislation in practical terms. Because my own objections to copyright are based mainly around ethical issues of intellectual property and authorship/ authority, I'll deal with the ethical side of the debate first. What I want to do is show you how difficult it is to resolve the ethical questions of copyright, and then show how even if these questions are ignored, the practical difficulties of employing copyright legislation for other than corporate benefit are immense. What I want to ask is, what is originality, what is copyright and who does it benefit?

Copyright is based on a philosophical view of knowledge as spontaneously generated and without a past. It acknowledges only one moment of authorship. In this view, an idea is autonomous, magically springing into the mind of the "genius". But we all know that ideas don't come from nowhere, for example, the Rolling Stones owe their success to Black American Rhythm and Blues music, generated by a culture, not an individual. Western society valorises the role of the individual to a high degree, attributing significant social and cultural change to "the Great Man". Fordism is a good example here. While history tends to attribute the 'discovery' of a production line method of factory organisation (as well as an entire cultural shift) to Henry Ford, this efficient method had long been employed in many contexts, from the medieval village farming system to the large Victorian kitchen. In this way, originality is a dubious concept, shored up by legislation.

If ideas are not simply the product of the individual, should they be owned by the individual? Attributing a work or idea to one author only, excludes and denies the contributions made by countless others to its generation. This is a way of commodifing ideas for the ultimate benefit of parasitic middlemen in the industries that mediate between us all as artists and audience. The result of this is a competitive environment that stifles creativity by encouraging us to jealously guard our ideas, and leaves us at the mercy of these middlemen and of the courts to protect our rights.

Without this stultification of the creative process ideas can be far more fertile and generative, benefitting us all. Using copyright legislation involves "staking one's claim" on an idea, encoding in a physical, delimited form the 'master copy' or quintessential embodiment; as something concrete to possess. Ideas are shepherded into pens, branded and milked; mastered, much as the Western urge is to conquer all intangibles, such as nature. The diversity and usefulness of ideas rely upon their freedom from monopoly, their ability to cross-fertilise; like the bio-diversity of the rainforest which can be drawn upon indefinitely if sustained.

For all the above reasons I would argue that copyright is an illegitimate and even immoral idea. Supposing you haven't found these arguments convincing, I want to now show how copyright is also

unworkable and of no use for any of us but the most powerful. There are three main elements to the copyright rationale. These are that it

i) encourages the artist by protecting their work and rewarding them for it

ii) benefits culture in turn

iii) protects the interests of the reproducer, such as the publisher, record company, etc

The first point is perhaps the most persuasive in generating consent for copyright legislation, yet it is also the most fallacious. Copyright protection exists only through the legal system. It has no ethical influence. As we know, the legal system only protects those able to pay for its services. At the same time, use of this system requires knowledge of the law and trust in its just execution. So, while a survey of recent copyright cases may throw up a number of examples in the Madonna Inc. versus Michael Jackson Pty. Ltd. vein, cases where individuals sue large companies are rare. Success is even more elusive. Only in the Bible does David kill Goliath.

On top of this, the way that present legislation is drafted does not take into consideration the needs of many indigenous cultures which utilise oral or performance media. In many cases works do not exist in material form, only in their enactment through story, dance or other impermanent forms. The copyright rationale also ignores group or tribal contributions to the work and its protective period of 50 years is unsuited to longstanding cultural artefacts. Indigenous cultures are particularly susceptible to artistic exploitation by commercial interests as they are often outside mainstream society and its benefits, such as financial security or knowledge of welfare and legal services. At the same time the perception of this "exotic" outsider perspective is part of what constitutes the value of their artworks.

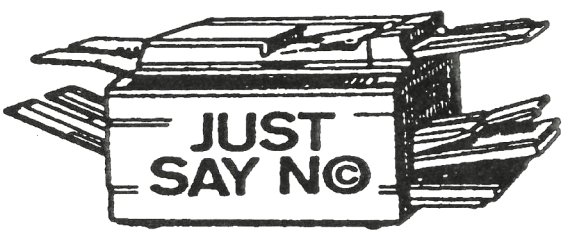
Evidently, the protection of copyright extends to only a small portion of producers of art and ideas. How could this state of affairs possibly benefit the wider culture? It can't. Where a small pool of powerful individuals have the resources to appropriate and then control art and ideas the tendency is towards monoculture. In its own way copyright contributes towards censorship through an atmosphere of fear around the quoting, critique and subversion of ideas and works. The expense of royalty payments can mean that alternative treatments of a work such as a play or pop song are impossible. Artist / audience dialogue is significantly impaired by this and the whole process of art as an ongoing endeavour, open and responsive to society and 'life' is impoverished.

John Perry Barlow, lyricist for the band the Grateful Dead and founder of the Electronic Frontiers Federation, negotiates the issues of copyright with regard to his band by allowing pirate recordings of concerts to be made openly, sometimes assisting by providing direct connections to the sound system. He argues that this does not diminish the commercial viability of the official band recordings, merely supplying another, additional version of their performance. He publishes his books electronically, free of charge, but maintains income from sales of the paper version. He argues that the added exposure provided by the online publishing only enhances his sales.

So who does copyright really benefit? The authorised reproducer, mentioned in point iii) of the copyright rationale. Clearly, this rationale and the accompanying legislation needs to be abandoned. Instead, artists should adopt an ethical stance where they acknowledge their sources and allow others to make use of their own work in the name of creativity. Artists can foster this process by indicating in their work that copyright does not apply and that quoting for non-exploitative purposes is encouraged. This acknowledgement of source on substantial quotes or borrowings can go a long way towards producing an atmosphere of trust and co-operation amongst artists. Only in such an environment can our ideas truly run free.

"If creativity is the field, copyright is the fence." John Oswald

NB. Artists may include writers of all sorts, fictional, news reportage and graffiti, students, critics, cooks & people in all fields where ideas are generated (everyone!)



Queer(y)ing Anarchism

Of course an Anarchist Conference is said to be what the people attending make it; yes this is fundamental to Anarchism. And while no conference, convention, meeting, discussion, book or bachelor and spinsters ball that the Anarchist movement produces can cover everything it must in principle be open and respectful of all the differing complex aspects of the people dedicated and caring enough to come (despite the well-founded warnings of their friends too fed up these days to attend.) It must reflect those peoples lives and the struggles for justice, freedom, fun and fruit loops (organic and homemade though they be!) that they bring with them to inform why it is they seek a vision of freedom that Anarchism might almost provide. BUT people are people and certain people are the same people making the same nauseating noises wherever you go and so this Anarchist conference has finally turned this writer into an Anasarcasticist of Anarcaustic proportions and thus asked most earnestly over and over to put pen to paper I instead snuck into someone's office and stole the following which I now reproduce in the interests of 'free thought':

OFFICE COPY
VISIONS OF FREEDOM CONFERENCE 95
REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTENDANCE

Appendix: page 307 , Category Z : QUEERS. BEFORE PROCEEDING:

We would like to make ourselves clear. All of the following rules and regulations do not paint a particular picture of reality, they do not designate borders of analysis and discussion across which you must not cross, they do not validate, legitimise and perpetuate the amplification of voices already working hard at silencing anyone who politically, culturally, racially, sexually, or through the vast mass of gender-oriented barriers and constraints, is an 'other', a deviant, a whingeing social work case. There are special workshops for people suffering these tiresome delusions. These are just basic guidelines for the smooth running

of workshops and the quick completion of the plenary sessions. You don't have to read these rules, remember in Anarchism nothing is compulsory, not even listening to or respecting other people and their differences. So grab your clipboards, tousle that hair, practise those quizzical frowns and lets go. (n.b.: 'queers' refers to those designated as discussable in the section of extraneous workshops for groups deemed 'other' such as those also for women, aboriginal peoples, etc...) Rule 1) Don't wear a dress, boys or girls or neither. Anarchists have no dress sense and no sense of humour .If you're a boy then you're either parodying women in a derogatory way or along with anyone else in a frock you're dressed impractically for the revolutionary riotting scheduled at lunch break.Rule 2) Arse fucking is a filthy non-procreative waste of resources (lube and condoms) and energy(calories). The same can be said of vaginal fisting, but dykes don't have sex, bisexuals just talk about it and trannies are stuck in their fish-nets for life... Neither do anarchists, so don't mention it as relevant to any analysis of the operations of dominant culture. Except if people are put in jail or shot by the army for doing it then sex has no place on our radical agenda, but since there are very few instances of this for heterosexual male pursuits in history then if you must bring it up save it for the appropriate group's workshop. If, however,you are a prime time presenter of some big time anarchist issue feel free to make off the cuff derogatory remarks about the practitioners of SM or prostitution or those that raise anything relevant to oppression due to missing out on membership to the angry anarchist boys brigade. And if you can't possibly say anything insightful or productive about an issue such as East Timor then feel free to defer to homophobic, hung-up jokes about arse fucking. Rule 3) From this you can see that power is a one dimensional concept and thus too is injustice. Which makes everything easy then. It's all about factories and working and growing vegies in Utopia, oh and newspapers and lots of books, books and bookshops. It's not really about the way people relate to each other and rescue each other with love or sex or sharing drugs or shoplifted lollies just to get through this hell hole of industrial culture, but here I digress. (So the rule here is if you can't see it but it makes you feel pain or scared or invisible or worthless or misunderstood and alone, then it is not real, you're just queer or something, take some Anarchism and youÕll feel better. Violence or power or oppression do not operate on levels that involve your mind, your heart, your sex or sexuality or your desire to defy either. They were just joking then; 'no one is free till we are all free' has become 'when we win we'll be more tolerant than they were' - of what we're not sure though. Or maybe this is just the recruitment catchcry of a revolutionary movement that needs as much fucking support as it can get but will not, can not, or just plain won't, regard with

any seriousness the issues of people who toil just as hard for change that they discover excludes them.) Rule 4) Don't say anything about any of the things I've just talked about, don't respond to other peoples exclusion of your reality, don't defy anything that perpetuates any of these already prevalent notions that you may see plastered to the walls or sprawled on the desks cos this will be called CENSORSHIP.(Self-censorship is an acceptable form of anarchistic expression however). Rule 5) Don't talk about coming out cos this is very 70s, and flares and flicks might be coming back but coming out isn't. It's daggy and obsolete. This should also counteract any of the problems people not yet out might confront by seeing homophobic stuff on the walls of an anarchist conference. Stay in, keep quiet and don't rock the boat sailing to its glorious horizon of visionary dreams. This is a conference about politics not some cosmic personal growth chat session. If you thought that the social, political, cultural context you grew up in operated in its most basic ways by invading the private domains and most vulnerable places of people just enough to make them the agents of their own and each others oppression , and if you thought this central to any dismantling of the operations of power, and if you for a moment imagined that this was an issue necessary to any concept of revolution, then you were wrong and you must want the Oprah Winfrey show down the road, cos we'll have none of that tedious, unmanly, daytime-TV nonsense at this serious, big time conference!? You big sook, we're here to talk about cops and bombs and did I mention books already, yeah lots of books, and bigwig American lecturers too. Rule 6) Social and personal identity; the fact that power is not something carried out solely by the machines and institutions of the state, but by the people and the societies in whose hands these operate is NOT part of our rhetoric alright, keep this to yourself and your pooncey little social theory books. Remember that the violent, stormtrooping, beige, briefcased, badly dressed, overly-brylcreemed, bile-belching, oh-so-butch blundering that is the western world's passage through history is NOT inextricably, inescapeably (and imperceptibly to some) interwoven with the legitimised and disguised privilege of white heterosexual male self-interest. This is just a boring, monolithic, out-moded load of whingeing by women and queers and blacks and all those OTHER obstacles to a neat revolutionary agenda that isn't too confronting for those who came here not to learn or listen to anything except there own already over-represented voices. Or have I said this already in the previous rules, oh well, not one to worry about going on too much in the same old tired, tested, tried and re-fried deep toned, lisp free vocal tunes. (Repetition and regurgitation is the true trademark of an anarchist; what else are all those old world, european, princely pontifications and formulae for revolution filed away on bookshelves next

to the boys own adventure stories for if not this.) Rule 7) PUT SIMPLY THEN, THE FUNDAMENTAL CLAIM BY FEMINISM THAT *'THE PERSONAL IS THE POLITICAL'* IS YET TO BE TAKEN ON BY ANARCHISTS, and until such a time as it is we will hear only what we want from those we've already heard. We don't want any integration of ideas and anlysis into the meaning of what Anarchism is and how it needs to be relevant to EVERYONE desiring freedom. We will maintain the currently well-walled, working definitions and values we have and deflect any critiques to the aforementioned appropriate workshops. We will add what we can cope with to our pot of revolution and stir but NO, WE AIN'T CHANGING THE EXISTING RECIPE IN ANY WAY. We want to hear about practical, idealistic, sane, sanitised ways of getting by in this world in an independent , anarchistic way that are relevant to the experiences of the social reality that the men writing what anarchism is know to be true. And a safe, respectful context of discussion will only be granted to these types of things... -i.e.: If you don't feel comfortable discussing the police by reference to raids on beats and streets, where you might make money or fun and run the risk of violence, rape, harassment, prosecution and the basic psychological intimidation the police give to poofs and women and trannies who need or want to earn money in this way, this is because you aren't meant to bring it up. If you want to talk about the ghettoisation, mafia control , corruption and extreme commercialisation that reigns over many of the only public places queers have for timeout from an otherwise entirely heterosexual world save it for the designated workshop. If you want to challenge male anarchist control of women's access to erotic, political, lesbian material in anarchist bookshops keep it for the workshop. If you think being kicked out of your home when you came out to your parents and trying to get by on the streets or in squats or parks or on the well-spent earnings of the numerous married men like your father who are looking for an economically disenfranchised boy or girl, with flesh like your own to pay for, is relevant to any discussion on the nature of the christian, patriarchal, worker-breeding, nuclear-family-factory-line. If you are pissed off and insulted by sweeping remarks about all sadomasochism made in the major plenary sessions of the conference by a man who knows nothing about underground queer SM culture and its value, practices and meaning, keep it for the queer workshop. If you got arse fucked this morning by your lover before alighting from bed to get to this conference only to find out that Gareth Evans can be ridiculed as weak and pathetic and plundered by portraying him as arse-fucked and you thought you were suddenly back in the high school playground (or at a punk gig of 'anarchistically-enlightened', hung-

up, hetero- boys who perhaps need a good prostate poke to activate their brains and sensitivity) then once again keep it to yourself and out of the way of activists using 'a well recognised working class colloquialism' to make their point. And if you feel ripped off by a large, national, funded student body using fringe, radical, unfunded, queer literature and appropriating it by removing its queer references and using it to their own ends and wonder what kind of Anarchism can do this then you are overreacting and suffering a paranoid, persecution complex. And the fact that a disease wiping out so many of the people you love or fuck or befriend may be less devastating compared to the millions of people suffering daily for no reason other than their race or geography or the agenda of First World industry, but nonetheless it still devastates and isolates and cripples a hardened queer like yourself and remains unmentioned at a conference on Anarchism except by those queers whose lives are riddled with dead friends and the shame, silence and ignorance a state tries to inflict, then this is because it should also be kept to the appropriate workshop. Rule 9) AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST: all of the above issues made reference to are NOT relevant to big issues, to the real work of an anarchist conference or movement. Masculinity, homophobia, misogyny, racism and the basic social, sexual and emotional hangups of those whose interests dominate and rule this world have no part whatsoever in the military-moralistic-macho-muslim-christian-judaeo-job-obsessed-junk-heap-of-machinery of war or rape or cultural genocide and imperialism or exploitation. The fact that impotent, fucked up, sexually repressed, shit scared, sold out, soul less, brain dead, boring people also happen to be those in control of this suicidal mess we call a culture is pure coincidence and don't you forget it.

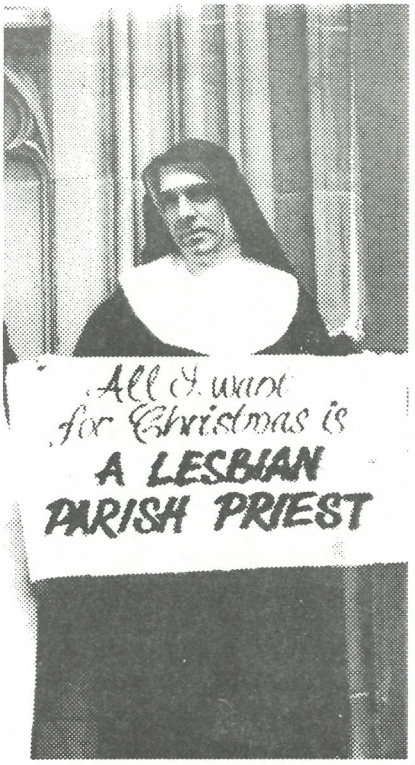
Well that's all me and my little camera hidden in a stilleto could catch from the files for now. Now if I can smuggle a movie camera into my platforms next year I can get all the unwritten rules out to you all before the next conference. Until then remember that Silence=Death, so don't get dead bored by Anarchism, it is a living thing that wants to grow, feed it your own radical spirit, your own queerness, not your continuing silence but your voice, lest it remains somewhere on a dark bookshelf being fed only the suffocating manure that stifled it this year. And remember what all good anarchists know: rules are meant to be broken.

Yours since clearly,
Sis. Mary Anonymous O.P.I.
July 1995

Religion and the Antichurch

Expansion of notes prepared by Sister Mary Mary Quite Contrary and delivered by Mother Abbyss of the Order of Perpetual Indulgence at 'Visions of Freedom', 21st January 1995.

Some of the problems of society that we perceive in our work as Gay Male Nuns and Lesbian Monks arise directly from the religious institutions of society, while others have a strong religious connection. These problems discussed below impinge more strongly on the Gay and Lesbian community, but have significant impact on others. This impact may increase if a toehold gained is used to widen the influence of these institutions. I raise a couple of illustrative cases and then suggest some ways that an anarchist order and its supporters can resist these influences.



The organized churches have set themselves up as the sole arbiters of morality in society. It has convinced the state of this monopoly, and the state defers to any pressure put on it. Particular influence is felt in Sydney from the Roman and Anglican Catholic Churches, and fundamentalist Protestants. Islamic fundamentalism has links with Catholic and fundamentalist groups, but has little direct influence. Examples of their influence, and its effect are:

Safe sex education & HIV prevention

Sex education is said to be a moral issue and must be provided by parents, not in schools or by other bodies who have more objective information on recent developments.

Consequently, safe sex education is being provided by those who don't know about it. Media advertising campaigns are censored to remove references to gays and young people (the two greatest risk groups for HIV infection by sexual transmission), so that the messages conveyed seem irrelevant to these groups. Any group trying to get around these restrictions is accused of distributing pornography or perverting children. How can you promote safe sex for young gay men without mentioning sex or homosexuality? As a result, the meagre funds allocated by government or raised by the community are largely wasted.

Gay rights

Homosexuality is declared to be immoral, so legislation to outlaw calls to kill gays was strongly opposed by fundamentalists. Papal edicts declare that the attempts of gays to obtain legal equality encourage violence. Although these people decry violence (in whispers), their promotion of the idea that gays are second class, or non-human, citizens gives encouragement to bashers and murderers. One young person under fundamentalist influence said that it was not right to attack Jews, because they were people, but it was okay to bash fags.

Gay Parenting and Teachers

Everyone knows that homosexuals are child molesters and unfit to be parents but few mention that 99% of child abuse is by heterosexual family members or clergy. Gay teachers are obviously unable to control their lust and will attempt to convert students to a gay lifestyle. Heterosexual teachers have absolutely no sexual feelings towards their students.

Celibacy

Some churches are prepared to accept celibate homosexuals as almost people. The Roman church especially values celibacy. It also claims to be the arbiter of morality for the whole world. Consider:

* Bishops and Archbishops forced by courts to acknowledge their illegitimate offspring and provide child support.

* The extremely high incidence of sexual abuse of children by their celibate guardians and clergy in religious-run orphanages and schools.

* The remote island in Papua New Guinea, where the whole population is Catholic. The priest in charge of the mission knows that they all use contraceptives and practice 'promiscuous sex'. He doesn't enforce the church's rules because he knows that they will all leave the church if he does!

If the pope cannot enforce his moral rules in his own church, how can he justify attempts to do so on non believers?

Another influence that we feel (often physically) is the police force. In general, police are above the law, and they use this immunity. Any complaint takes years to investigate and the police often change or hide any evidence. If a complainant is persistent enough to follow the complaint through the years and falsified evidence, the police know that they will get a token reprimand.

The mainstream media are so heavily dependent on government favours (foreign ownership, monopolies etc) that they don't dare oppose it. Thus no dissenting views are published, and reports of anti-establishment action are put down to ratbags & lunatic fringe groups. Examples are many, such as the US presidential visits, arms fair actions, conservation issues.... The OPI is quite often subject to this treatment. The papal visit actions of 1986 & 1995 were not reported at all. In fact, the only print coverage in 1995 was an 'opinion' column before the visit, describing us as a group of drag queens, and trivialising our action as protesting the pope's attitude of 'love the sinner but hate the sin' (which is Fred Nile's line, not the pope's)

What Can We Do?

How can we take back control of society from these entrenched groups? We of the OPI have a high visibility but limited numbers. We take every available opportunity to visibly bypass the church/state alliance and promote moral issues independently and distribute information outside accepted channels. We hand out condoms and safe sex information to all, with a special emphasis on those groups neglected by the government campaigns. We support alternative, uncensored, media - for example, community radio, TV and newspapers - that promote non-discriminatory access (some community productions still oppose gay content). Unfortunately, our image still makes it easy to label us as ratbags, but by being visible, vocal and coherent we try to make it harder to stick.

This sort of action is available to all, not just people in habit. Watch police, press, politicians and church closely. At every opportunity, do something. Highlight hypocrisy and punctuate pomposity.

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ON BEING AND BECOMING FEMINIST

Feminism, sad to say, is not a genetically acquired state. If it were I could claim to have inherited the feminist factor from a feisty auburn-haired Welsh grandmother who used her nursing skills to help unmarried mothers. Imagine being fixed in feminist mode from birth ! Which is all I can do, because the reality for most western-style feminists in the late twentieth century is that we graduate through our woman-related experiences of the world towards that enlightened state. A state which having no universal beginning point, no measurable outcome or consequential end-point, leaves us free to identify ourselves, both in and on our own terms, as more or less feminist at any stage of the process. So it is that I describe myself as actively BEING a feminist while still journeying towards BECOMING one through the lived and learned experiences of my everyday life.

Along with many of the best things in life, feminism defies definition. For me to fix and focus on something as nebulous and layered into my consciousness, as woven through my internal and external life as feminism, is an impossible exercise in objectivity. In general terms I can describe feminism as a philosophy that has informed the green, the socialist, the anarchist and others amongst social movements of our time: that's ever evolving and kept alive by the empowering proactions and reactions of women everywhere to their exclusion from the social, economic and political decision-making processes which so deeply affect their lives. Or I can describe feminism in the way I continue to experience it, as a personal philosophy. A philosophy in active, creative process, to which I am powerfully linked as participant. Not because I'm a woman, but because it speaks to me directly, it sheds light on the myriad threads which have gone into creating the form and the fabric of my life. It gives meaning to my history, to my way of being, thinking and acting in the world. An accessible, outward-looking, open-to-input philosophy without hard, excluding intellectual edges in spite of its numerous theories regarding every issue pertinent to women. and therefore to all people on the pianet. Appealing in its reflection, tolerance and celebration of human diversity and in its capacity to transcend barriers of culture and language. A philosophv of immediacy and meaning for every woman who finds herself living, working. birthing and dying in a patriarchal society today. And where in the world does a patriarchal society not exist ?

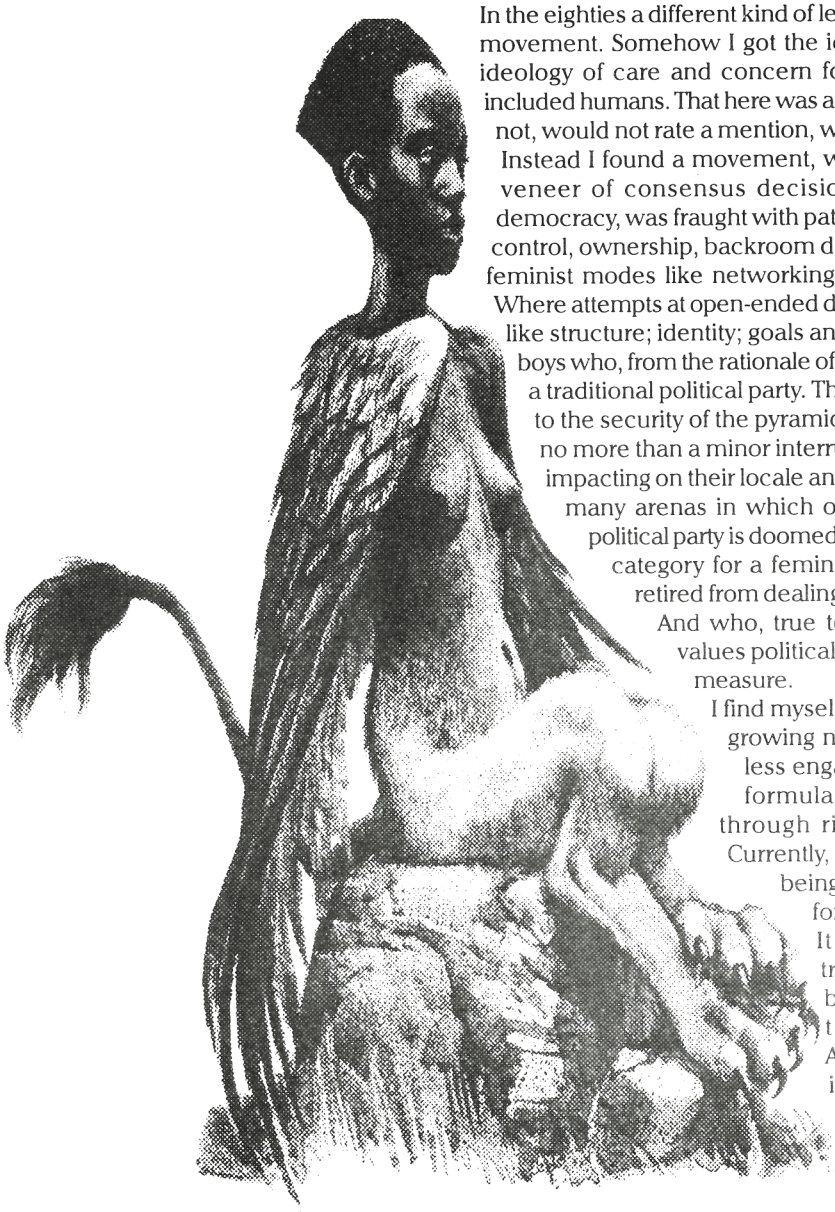
For me, being part of the women's movement has meant being engaged at the head, heart and gut level, in an inclusive social movement which gives expression to feminism in both theoretical and practical terms, which has no formal structure, no centre, no joining fees or qualifications, no membership lists, no hierarchy and therefore no power base. Cut through the broad generalisations to the personal, local, regional and cultural variations, and you begin to understand why neither the movement, nor the philosophy that underpins it, can be captured, pinned down, measured, categorised, contained, controlled. This to me is the greatest of its strengths. May it always be so. And all it takes is the consciousness of one woman to keep it alive.

Though feminism is not exclusive to women. it's been my experience that being born a female, to my particular parents, in this particular society, in this particular century has tended to make my becoming a feminist fairly unavoidable. I learned it at my mother's knees. red and swollen from scrubbing floors; from my father's whip hand: from a school principal's parade ground discipline: from Hollywood and the Women's Weekly; from the practice of sitting boys next to girls as a form of punishment in primary school; from witnessing three daughters being 'schooled' into a social system: from discovering the personal reality of cultural invisibility; and from breaking socially prescribed gender rules. For me not to have become a feminist would have meant denying the validity of my own experience, of sustaining a life-long pretence of being without sight, speech, hearing, intelligence, of settling for fantasy and compromise. The easier journey of the two, some have argued, because self-negation had been their choice. Ultimately, I found it too high a price.

Had I not been so affected by the patriarchal mind sets, behaviours, values, rules and laws which pervade all of our public and private lives, or by a social conditioning which was ever so subtly forming me into a passive product, it's possible that I would have travelled differently. The deep marks and impressions made by such powerful and pervasive forces weren't to be the initiatiory rites and route to instant feminist status. This instead, a gradual and cumulative process of realization over time. A process advanced by significant moments of change in consciousness, behaviour and direction, one which grew hesitantly and spasmodically out of my reactions to the social and political environment around me.

Although politically active, in the non-party sense, since my student years at RMIT, with experience of dealing with institutions like local councils, state and federal government departments, the Church, university councils, the media and the legal system, I seem to have been inordinately slow in recognizing all of these as solidly entrenched bastions of patriarchal power. It took my emerging feminism and participation in a resurgent women's movement in the seventies, first to understand, then to distinguish between their functional connection to the 'real' world and their extreme disconnectedness from my real life: to see clearly my relative powerlessness as a female member of Australian society. The last, in particular, a seminal waking from which I can measure the subsequent growth of an abiding sense of personal power.

During this period I discovered other women making similar journeys to my own. Similar because none were clear-cut, goal-oriented journeys involving maps and straight lines. Rather, they were fragmented breaks for freedom and space to review and re-invent ourselves away from the frustrations and constraints, the physical and mental demands of our paid and unpaid working lives. For us, the time was right and ripe, because women were coming together all over the world to revitalize a long dormant women's movement, finding new sources of energy, support and inspiration together. We were envisioning possibilities for lives fuller, richer and more just than those modelled by our mothers. Seeing beyond the limitations of lives lived behind the scenes, lives lived through and for others, to lives we could claim as our own. Seeing, as we tunnelled and talked our way in from the margins we commonly occupied, that we had to be heard, that we had to gain acknowledgement for the many skills we contributed to our society, that, as the previously invisible fifty percent, we had to re-position ourselves in order to be seen. Rethinking the language, using terms like, 'Financial Manager of Domestic Affairs' and 'Co-ordinator of Life-Enhancing Experiences' at local job centres and in job applications, to describe some of the tasks of the wife/mother role was one of many ways we challenged the social and cultural norms of those times. Getting references to back up such process



wondrous titles was the other problem !

In the eighties a different kind of learning awaited me in the green movement. Somehow I got the idea in my head that the green ideology of care and concern for all life forms on the planet included humans. That here was a movement where gender could not, would not rate a mention, where gender would not matter. Instead I found a movement, which beneath a pseudo-green veneer of consensus decision making and participatory democracy, was fraught with patriarchal behaviour patterns like control, ownership, backroom decision-making. devaluation of feminist modes like networking, community consultation etc. Where attempts at open-ended discussion of foundational issues like structure; identity; goals and means were marginalised by boys who, from the rationale of expediency, were set on having a traditional political party. The party plan, a welcome return to the security of the pyramid for some greens, represented no more than a minor interruption to involvement in issues impacting on their locale and their lives for others. As one of many arenas in which one can actively be green, the political party is doomed to the permanently unattractive category for a feminist like me, who has tired and retired from dealing with patriarchal organizations. And who, true to her feminist, anarchist soul, values political and personal freedom beyond measure.

I find myself in the mid-nineties amongst a growing network of women, all more or less engaged in the creative process of formulating eco-feminist philosophy through richly diverse social actions. Currently, I'm working on a project which, being driven by passion, exemplifies for me the ideal in political action. It is the documentation, in traditional story format, of the breast cancer experiences of twenty-one very different Australian women. The concept is unequivocally subjective, being derived from personal experience; it is small scale, achievable and open-ended: a co-operative

which utilises networking and information exchange to involve and inform many different people. The final publication. as well as giving public voice to those who really own their cancer and empowering women in the management of our own health, is also pleasingly anarchistic in its challenge to the authority of one of the largest industries in the world.

A natural follow on will be the production of a practical, informative guide for women with breast cancer, a combination of research and real experiences. Meanwhile a third project, potentially as productive as the second, though more anarchistic in style and intent, is nudging at the edges of fantasy for serious attention. Imagine a three day party for hundreds of breast cancer women from everywhere and anywhere in Australia In late winter, with wonderful food, music, balloons, dancing, talk, gossip and conversation. Where else but Alice Springs. the most central location in the country ? Courtesy of the various corporations which create and market all the products, the drugs, prostheses, special bras, wigs, etc. relevant to the treatment and management of a disease which affects one in ten Australian women. One big unstructured celebration, with no media access, no guest speakers, and no politicians. The only qualification to join the big bash, a missing, surgically scarred, irradiated, ulcerated, or reconstructed boob or two. This is one party I would willingly join!

The two behaviours I've found essential in making the journey to becoming my kind of femlnist have been vigilance and discipline, not least to maintain a theory-free zone in my head. Why so ? Because the activist imperative, for me, is not theory, but direct, practical involvement and I happen to work best when maximum head space is reserved for lateral thought and action as required. I view theory in practice as something which might be constructed as a useful tool to explain the 'why' and the 'what' of a political action after the event. Not the 'how' of it, which is what compels me more. Canadian feminist. Catherine MacKinnon, wrote of feminist activist theory in 1991:

To write the theory of this practice is not to work through logical puzzles or entertaining conundra, not to fantasize utopias, not to tell people what to do. It is not to exercise authority: it does not lead practice. Its task is to engage life through developing mechanisms that identify and criticize rather than reproduce social practices of subordination and to make tools of women's consciousness and resistance that further a practical struggle to end inequality. This kind of theory requires humility and it requires participation.

MacKinnon's key words 'practice' and 'participation' convey the continuum of the lived experience, which for me is a daily balancing act of surviving in a patriarchal system while challenging patriarchal values, mannerisms and attitudes wherever I encounter them. Like good wine I'm improving with age, more from the notion that I've got nothing to lose than from any innate or learned wisdom - a cancer experience does wonders for attitude! - and you could find me operating as a warrior-feminist in the war zone of Australian society, anywhere from a bush track to a bus, humour in one hand, knife in the other. My mission not to 'search and destroy', but to search and annoy, in order to stir a mind set or two. My favourite targets - pomposity, super-inflated egos and rationalists of all shades.

At the core of all that I do and have done, - student, teacher, wife, glazier, parent, researcher, tiler, social activist, failed bricklayer, gypsy, artist, - is the constancy of a feminist consciousness. My vision of freedom. To belong to a culture which doesn't need the word 'feminist'. Until then VIVA la FEMINISTA!

"There is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside it."
George Eliot

Diana Ward

anarchism OR BARBARISM

As central authority collapses in Afghanistan, Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia, these former centralized nation states find themselves in a state of perpetual civil war. As various groups strive to recapture state power and impose their will on the people and the country, tens of thousands are slaughtered in the worst imaginable ways, social infrastructure breaks down and the economy is reduced to a struggle for survival which is based on the worst aspects of a laissez faire (winner take all) economic system.

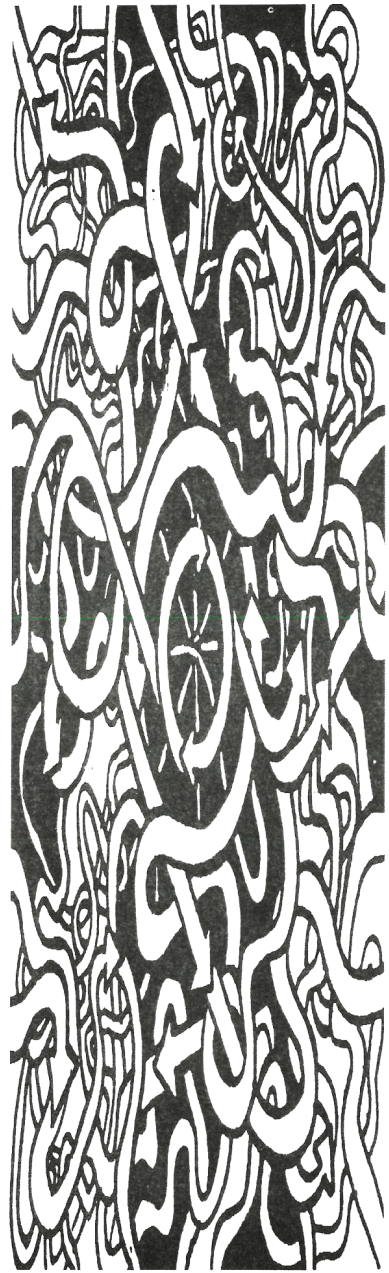
All over the world the collapse of centralized forms of government are being followed by mass slaughter and economic and social disruption and disintegration. The chaos that seems to follow the breakdown of a hierarchical nation state poses some very important questions for anarchists not just here in Australia, but all over the world. As the nation state collapses and personal security cannot be guaranteed by a police force or by the armed forces, people DON'T spontaneously form a decentralized non-hierarchical society but strive for security by becoming insular and throwing in their lot with people of similar religious, racial or cultural backgrounds. The breakdown of central authority is not normally accompanied by a mad dash for freedom, but it's accompanied by a search for security through hierarchy, leadership and domination. This dash to re-impose hierarchy leads to the destruction of peoples and cultures that are seen as threats to the emerging hierarchical society. No wonder most people see Anarchism as some naive gossamer dream.

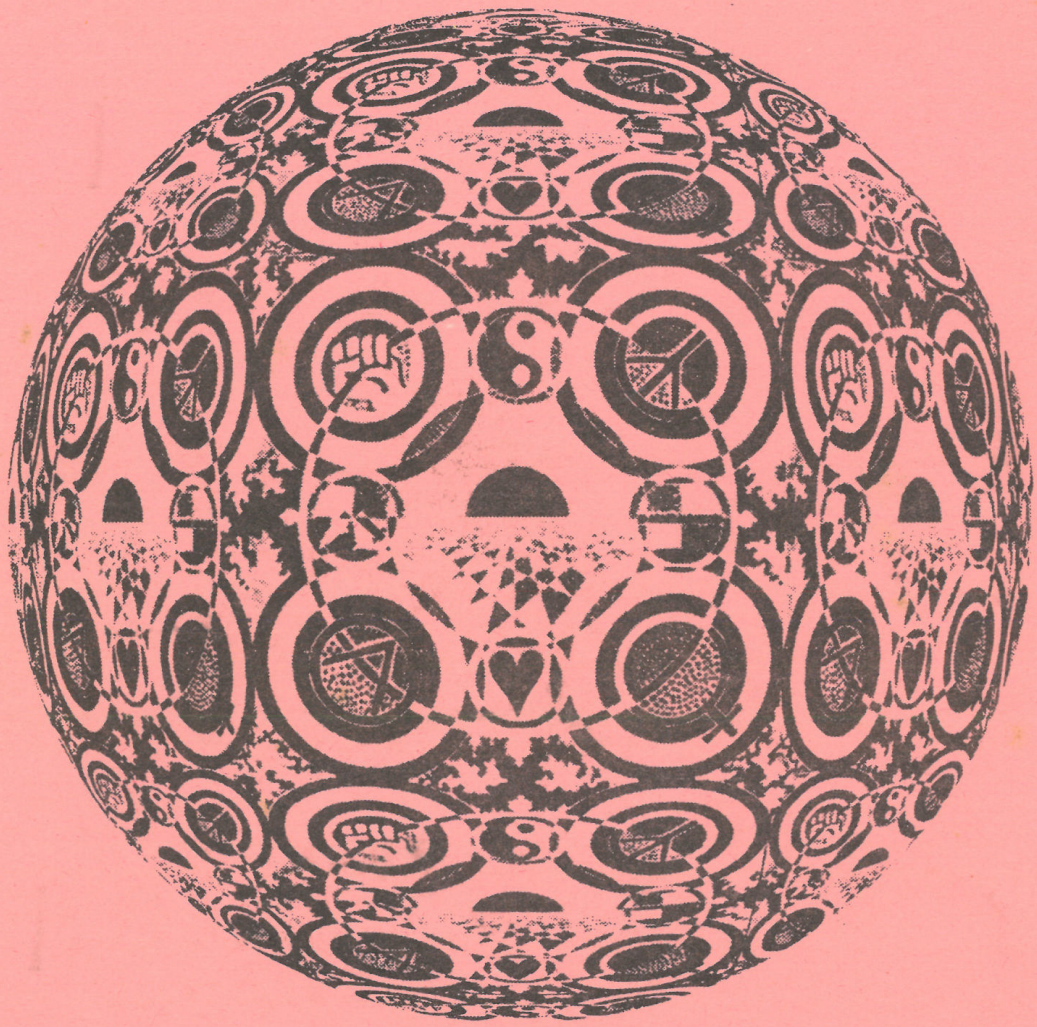
Human beings are neither good nor bad, evil butchers or peaceful angels. What most of us are capable of doing depends to a large degree not on our genetic makeup but on our social conditioning. With the collapse of the Third Reich some of the most frightful Nazi butchers become model citizens almost overnight. In Rwanda the people that are butchering men and women and children with knives and machetes are not monsters but are practicing Christians, honest farm workers, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. The carnage that we are witnessing as central authority breaks down can be seen in regions as culturally diverse as Bosnia and Rwanda.

The question that we should ask ourselves as anarchist activists is whether the chaos that follows the breakdown of a nation state or centralized authority is inevitable. If it's inevitable all that we have talked about and all that we have tried to do is a waste of time and we should disband our organizations and take up dog breeding or some other hobby. If it's not inevitable we should be asking ourselves why the collapse of centralized authority around the world today is normally followed by carnage and social and economic disintegration while the collapse of centralized authority in Spain after 1936 was followed by the creation of an egalitarian society that was based on the creation of a federation of workplace and community councils.

The answer is so simple it's breathtaking. The Spanish Revolution was preceded by years of anarchist agitation and the formation of anarchist organizations up and down the breadth of Spain. From the smallest hamlet to the largest urban centres anarchist organizations grew and flourished. When centralized authority and the state collapsed these organizations were able to form the nucleus of a new society whose security depended on co-operation and equal access to power and wealth. Whether the collapse of centralized authority leads to carnage and social and economic disintegration and eventually to the reimposition of a new centralized authority based on a political philosophy or a new racial, religious or ethnic authority depends on the extent of ANARCHIST ORGANIZATION. If the groundwork has been done and people are familiar with anarchist ideas and modes of organization, the possibility that the state and centralized authority can be replaced by a federation of community and workplace councils, is a living breathing possibility. If Anarchist organization and modes of thought are missing from the equation, the ensuing struggle to fill the power void created by the collapse of centralized authority will always create human carnage and economic and social disintegration.

Joe Toscano ,
January 1995





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